

To: Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis
From: Katie Short, Director; Amber Weed, Chief of Staff and Policy
Director; Amy Rose, Senior Analyst
CC: Brandon Dudley, Sophie Elsner, and Sasha Legette with Precinct
One
Date: March 1, 2022
Re: **Federal Pandemic-Related Funding to Community Colleges**

In February 2022, Precinct One requested the Harris County Commissioners Court's Analyst's Office (the "Analyst's Office") report total funds received by community colleges in Harris County from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), passed by Congress in 2021 to aid with the nation's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This memo responds to that request, and reports funding from two additional federal pandemic response sources: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA).

Summary of Federal COVID-19 Relief Funds to Higher Education Institutions.

Institutions of higher education received federal COVID-19 pandemic-related relief funding starting in 2020 through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), which is separate funding for colleges included within the larger federal relief acts. As of March 1, 2022, there have been three HEERF funds established from three federal acts:

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)¹ is authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, which was passed by Congress on March 27, 2020. This bill allotted \$2.2 trillion to provide fast and direct economic aid to those negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of that money, approximately \$14 billion was allocated to HEERF.

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II)² is authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), signed into law on December 27, 2020. In total, the CRRSAA authorized \$81.88 billion in support for HEERF II, in addition to the \$30.75 billion expeditiously provided through the CARES Act.

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III)³ is authorized by the American Rescue Plan (ARP), signed into law on March 11, 2021, providing \$39.6 billion in support to institutions of higher education through HEERF III, to serve students and ensure learning continues during the COVID-19 pandemic. ARP funds are in addition to funds authorized by CRRSAA and CARES Act.

Types of Funding Provided through HEERF. Congress created several programs within HEERF, HEERF II, and HEERF III for distributing funds. Community colleges within Harris County received funding under three portions:

- **Institutional Portion.**⁴ These funds are intended to cover costs associated with significant changes to the delivery of instruction due to the coronavirus. Examples include expanding remote learning programs, building IT capacity to support such programs, and training faculty and staff to operate effectively in a remote learning environment. Colleges may choose to use the Institutional Portion to provide emergency financial aid grants to students.
- **Student Aid Portion.**⁵ These funds are intended to provide emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare).
- **Minority Serving Institutions.**⁶ⁱ These funds are granted to Minority Serving Institutions (institutions of higher education that serve minority populations) and are intended to supplement the Institutional and Student Aid portions received by the institutions.

There are four public community colleges in Harris County: Houston Community College, Lee College, Lone Star College, and San Jacinto Community College. **Between the three federal funding acts (CARES, CRRSSA, and ARP), public community colleges in Harris County received \$547,322,987 in aid.**

Table 1 reflects total federal pandemic-related aid to community colleges in Harris County by institution and federal aid type.

⁴ Minority-serving institutions are accredited academic institutions whose enrollment of a single minority or a combination of minorities exceeds fifty percent of the total enrollment, including graduate and undergraduate and full- and part-time students.

Table 1		Federal Pandemic Aid to Public Community Colleges in Harris County			
		Houston Community College	Lee College	Lone Star College System	San Jacinto Community College District
HEERF	Institutional Portion	\$14,147,196	\$2,028,547	\$14,411,628	\$4,475,231
	Student Aid Portion	\$14,147,196	\$2,028,547	\$14,411,628	\$4,475,232
	Minority Serving Institutions	\$1,905,115	\$259,225	\$3,908,532	\$589,114
	TOTAL HEERF	\$30,199,506	\$4,316,319	\$32,731,787	\$9,539,577
HEERF II	Institutional Portion	\$50,575,792	\$6,539,272	\$ 48,806,249	\$19,350,825
	Student Aid Portion	\$14,147,196	\$2,028,547	\$14,411,628	\$4,475,232
	Minority Serving Institutions	\$3,766,858	\$469,906	\$3,557,693	\$1,321,737
	TOTAL HEERF II	\$68,489,845	\$9,037,725	\$66,775,569	\$25,147,794
HEERF III	Institutional Portion	\$57,004,774	\$7,394,067	\$55,133,532	\$20,375,946
	Student Aid Portion	\$59,292,784	\$7,542,890	\$57,496,128	\$21,098,298
	Minority Serving Institutions	\$6,555,962	\$795,910	\$6,155,851	\$2,238,723
	TOTAL HEERF III	\$122,853,520	\$15,732,867	\$118,785,511	\$43,712,967
Total Federal Pandemic Aid Received		\$221,542,871	\$29,086,911	\$218,292,867	\$78,400,338
Total Federal Pandemic Aid Allocated or Spent		\$121,727,760 (55%)	\$17,735,062 (61%)	\$99,000,000 (45%)	\$78,400,338 (100%)
Total Federal Pandemic Aid to Public Community Colleges in Harris County: \$547,322,987					

Source: Texas Association of Community Colleges

ENDNOTES

¹ US Department of Education, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opecaresact.html>

² US Department of Education, Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opecrrsaa.html>

³ US Department of Education, American Rescue Plan. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opecarp.html>

⁴ US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opec/heerfinstitutionalcoverletter.pdf>

⁵ US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Frequently Asked Questions from Students about the Higher Education Emergency Relief Student Grants. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opec/heerfstudentfaqs-crrsaadisc.pdf>

⁶ US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Certificate and Agreement for an Award under ARP (a)(2). Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opec/arpa2newca.pdf>



The Harris County Commissioners Court's Analyst's Office provides the Harris County Commissioners Court members with objective, nonpartisan, and timely fiscal and policy analysis related to the efficiency and effectiveness of various County operations.

This memo was prepared by Amy Rose, Senior Analyst.

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